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Economic and Social Council

Provisional

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Organizational session for 2013

Provisional summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 28 January 2013, at 11 a.m.

Temporary President: Mr. Percaya (Vice-President) ..... (Indonesia)
President: Mr. Osorio ..... (Colombia)

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In the absence of Mr. Koterec (Slovakia), Mr. Percaya (Indonesia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11.25 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Temporary President** declared open the organizational session for 2013 of the Economic and Social Council.

Statement by the outgoing President

2. **Mr. Koterec** (Slovakia), speaking as the outgoing President of the Economic and Social Council, said that 2012 had been a challenging year as a result of the ongoing social, economic and environmental crises around the world, illustrating the need for a strong and effective United Nations system. Continued food price volatility threatened the survival of many and could reverse recent development gains. The prolonged impact of the global economic crisis had affected the Northern economies and also endangered developing countries. The economic downturn and uncertainty had hit young people particularly hard, with youth unemployment rates at unprecedented levels worldwide. The Council had therefore strived to improve young people's involvement in its activities and had organized a highly successful youth forum to address the challenges of the labour market. It had also organized an event, in preparation for the annual ministerial review, which sought to create partnerships for more and better jobs for young people through dialogue between Governments, the private sector, charities and civil society organizations. The 2012 annual ministerial review, brining together some 40 Ministers, high-level policymakers, academics and representatives of the private sector and civil society, had also focused on promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels. The Council would continue to focus on unemployment and to ensure constructive follow-up on that issue.

3. In July 2012, the Development Cooperation Forum had brought together policymakers, politicians and representatives of non-governmental organizations and private foundations to discuss the future of development cooperation. Its scope and influence should be expanded further to promote global development cooperation that was coherent, effective and accountable.

4. Over the course of 2012, the Council had demonstrated its potential to become a central mechanism in the international development framework; at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, world leaders recognized the Council's key role in achieving a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and made a commitment to strengthen it. Recommendations put forward on how to strengthen the Economic and Social Council included adopting an issues-based approach to promote coherence and to streamline the Council's work; ensuring a leadership role for the Council in efforts to enhance partnerships with civil society, the private sector and academia to address emerging development challenges; holding meetings throughout the year to raise the visibility of particular issues; creating a more responsive and nimble Council; and establishing a full-time Presidency. The brainstorming would continue under the new Presidency, with the forthcoming review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16. In the meantime, members must ensure that there was sufficient political will to allow the Council to implement meaningful and forward-looking changes.

Election of the President

5. **The Temporary President** said that, under rule 18 of the Council's rules of procedure, in 2013 it was the turn of the Latin American and Caribbean States to nominate a candidate for President. Consequently, he would take it that the Council wished to elect Mr. Osorio (Colombia), who had been nominated by those States, to the post of President.

6. *Mr. Osorio (Colombia) was elected President by acclamation.*

7. *Mr. Osorio (Colombia) took the Chair.*

Statement by the President

8. **The President** said that the Rio+20 outcome document outlined a clear vision that sought to inspire and guide the work of the Council and to ensure that its efforts had more positive and tangible results. It was crucial to maintain the commitment to follow up the Rio+20 decisions and to turn the Council into a more effective body, playing an important and constructive role on the world stage. While that would not happen

overnight, the year ahead could well prove to be a turning point. To that end, his country had submitted a proposal for strengthening the Council and equipping it with the necessary tools and working methods to focus on implementing activities in the field. The current review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on strengthening the Council would also produce constructive suggestions.

9. In 2013, the Council would focus on ensuring that its work concentrated on real issues affecting the world's citizens, providing a forum where global leaders, policymakers and development practitioners could come together to solve problems. Improvements to the Council's working methods could include a more focused and coherent sequence of meetings; harmonizing the work of the functional commissions with that of the Council in order to avoid duplication and to maximize comparative advantages; scaling up partnerships with key intergovernmental stakeholders, academia and the private sector; better integrating peace and security issues in its development work; enabling the Council to respond swiftly to emerging challenges; and examining proposals for a full-time Presidency, with the requisite office and resources.

10. Implementing those reforms was more important than ever, as stronger institutions would ensure the success of sustainable development policies and the United Nations development agenda. The Council should seize the opportunity to work with its partners to make extreme poverty a thing of the past and sustainable development a reality. The Council would also bring its extensive experience to bear when formulating the post-2015 development planning and implementing the follow-up to Rio+20.

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

11. **Mr. Wu** Hongbo (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the transition of the Presidency of the Council was occurring at a time when humanity was being forced to contemplate the inevitable transition towards sustainable development — the planet simply could not sustain 9 billion inhabitants aspiring for higher standards of living if its inhabitants remained entrenched in unsustainable consumption.

12. The coming year would be a very important one, with the sustainable development goals beginning to take shape and the launch of the process to determine strategies to finance sustainable development. Discussions on the modalities of the high-level political forum on sustainable development would start very soon, and the contours of the development agenda beyond 2015 would begin to emerge with the presentation of the report by the High-level Panel on the post-2015 Development Agenda.

13. He welcomed the steps taken by the Council to deal with a unified development agenda, notably the efforts to strengthen the Council. The Rio+20 Conference had opened new vistas for the Council and had given new momentum to its reform process; he was confident the new President would take full advantage of those opportunities.

14. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs was fully committed to the crucial process of strengthening the Council, and would continue to build its analytical capacities so as to improve its support for the work of the Council in what would surely be an interesting, challenging and eventful year.

Election of the Bureau

15. **The President** said that rule 18 of its rules of procedure provided for the Council to elect four Vice-Presidents. He took it that the Council wished to elect the candidates nominated by each regional group.

16. *Mr. Osman (Sudan), Mr. Mohammad Kahn (Pakistan), Mr. Hoxha (Albania) and Mr. Sajdik (Austria) were elected Vice-Presidents of the Council for 2013 by acclamation.*

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (E/2013/1 and E/2013/2)

17. **The President** invited the Council to adopt the provisional agenda for its 2013 organizational session, contained in document E/2013/2.

18. *The provisional agenda was adopted.*

19. **The President** recalled that in its resolutions 1988/77, 1989/114, and in its decision 2006/206, the Council had decided to adopt certain measures to revitalize and improve its functioning. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 45/264, 48/162, 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 61/16, had also taken important steps to restructure and revitalize the Council and consultations were being held to review the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16. On the basis of the guidelines given in those

resolutions, the Council would have before it for consideration at its organizational session the annotated provisional agenda (E/2013/2) and the proposed basic programme of work for the Council for 2013 and 2014 (E/2013/1)

20. In conformity with the provisions of paragraph 2 (l) of Council resolution 1988/77, informal consultations would be held on the proposed basic programme of work and on the other matters requiring action by the Council at the organizational session.

21. Turning to the question of seating arrangements for delegations, he proposed that, as in the past, lots should be drawn to determine which delegation would occupy the first seat.

22. *The delegation of Croatia was selected by the drawing of lots to take the first seat.*

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.